

Alumna finds her muse

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In Virginia Saussy's "Glitterage," women transform ordinary shoes into Mardi Gras memorabilia for the Krewe of Muses parade, which is on Thursday (Feb. 12) this year. (Photo by Sally Asher)

From the outside, Virginia Saussy's garage looks like every other garage on her uptown street. But its innocuous exterior belies that it is the birthplace of some of the most coveted Mardi Gras throws ? Muses shoes. It's Saussy's "Glitterage," where year-round she and her [Krewe of Muses](#) (and Muses-loving) sisters meet to transform ordinary shoes into Mardi Gras memorabilia.

For Saussy, a 1988 [Newcomb College graduate](#) and a marketing and business

consultant, perhaps the greatest secret to Carnival success is to buy glitter by the pound. Saussy, who claims she was never a craft person before Muses, now has approximately 150 pounds of glitter stored in her "Glitterage," along with three workbenches, drying racks and tubs of rhinestones, feathers and sequins to embellish the shoes stacked everywhere.

Saussy's glitter odyssey started in 2000, when fellow Newcomb graduate (and Muses founder) Staci Rosenberg asked her to get involved. Rosenberg named Saussy creative director of Muses at the first meeting, a title she still holds. Saussy is in charge of the Muses parade theme (a closely guarded secret) and all of their floats' themes. The irreverent themes honor Mardi Gras' satirical traditions.

"I like to think of Muses' parade title as joke," Saussy said, "and each float as a punch line."

Muses made history on the krewe's inaugural ride in 2001 as the only all-female krewe to parade at night on the uptown traditional route. The krewe has grown from 600 women on rented floats to 1,033 women on their own floats with their own den and hundreds on the waiting list to become krewe members.

"Every time we get ready to roll, I feel like a 5-year-old on Christmas morning and a rock star all rolled into one," Saussy said. "It's a high that lasts for the next 364 days!"

Saussy's tips for snagging a shoe: Muses love signs ? especially funny ones.

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